

Sita Likuski

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You might wonder where these first twelve generations of Maduro ancestors came from. The first ones actually came from Portugal, and the later ones from Curacao, Venezuela, the Virgin Islands, Santo Domingo, and even exotic places like Cleveland, Ohio and New Orleans, Louisiana. In between, there were stops in Spain, France, Hamburg, and Amsterdam, a place where some decided to stay.

The first of our Maduro ancestors was Diogo Rodrigues or Roiz, the old form of the name. His parents, Antonio and Leonor Roiz, were New Christians, meaning that they had converted – willingly or not – to Christianity. From records of the Inquisition when Diogo and his brother Luis were arrested, but eventually released, we know the family was living near Trancoso, Portugal in 1612. Both Diogo and Luis at some point added Maduro to their name, so it became Roiz o Maduro, meaning Roiz the Maduro (o means “the” in Portuguese),. They may have done this to distinguish themselves from younger members of the family who had the same names, using Maduro which can mean mature in Spanish (or even prudent or wise). Whatever the original reason, the name is found in official records as Roiz o Maduro, and sometimes as Roiz Maduro.

Diogo had a son Antonio. He was not as fortunate as his father and uncle had been, since he was arrested and convicted by an auto-da-fe – an act of faith - in Coimbra and burned at the stake on Aug 28, 1616. His wife had fled Portugal with their four children, and reached St. Jean de Luz, France, where there was a large community of Jews from Spain and Portugal. Her one daughter, Clara Roiz o Maduro, eventually went to Amsterdam, where she readopted Judaism, took the Jewish name Rachel, and married a man named Moseh Levy. They added her name to his, and that was the beginning of the new surname, Levy o Maduro.

Rachel and Moseh had a son David Levy Maduro, who stayed in Amsterdam. This branch of the Maduro's died out by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their other son

Salomon married Hanah de Crasto in 1649 when he was 20 and she was 15. They had nine children. One son and two daughters remained in Amsterdam, and one son moved to Jamaica. However, the oldest, Moseh, moved to Curacao shortly after his marriage in 1670 to Esther Sardo, who was born in Bordeaux, France. The other four sisters and brothers also moved there, as did their mother Hanah after her husband Salomon's death.

So that was the start of the Maduro presence in Curacao which continues until today. Descendants of Moseh and Esther are in St. Thomas, Panama, Costa Rica, the U.S., Canada, England, and many other countries. There are also known to be Maduro's in Brazil, Indonesia, the Phillipines, and some still in Portugal, although the link to our Curacao ancestors hasn't been found yet. I think that some prefer not to admit the possibility of their Jewish past, as I've contacted a couple of Maduro's in Portugal, mentioning the Jewish history of the family, but I've never received a response from them. After all, the Inquisition lasted until modern times in Portugal.

But where ours came from, where these names came from, is thanks to a variety of sources. The primary source was our cousin, Joshua "Jossy" Levy Maduro, who spent years researching the Curacao families, using the original documents from the Portuguese Inquisition, the Dutch records for Curacao and the Netherlands, and the Danish records for St. Thomas, tracing the history of the families. Then there are Rabbi Isaac Emmanuel's books about the Jews of Curacao, including details about every aspect of Jewish life on the island. These include lists of ship owners, tax records, synagogue documents, burial records and pages and pages of marriage records which demonstrated how close the families were. Since these are indexed by the groom's name, with his parents shown, sometimes it takes a while to find others in the bride's families, since the brides are not indexed. So I am still working on those. There are about 500 people on this chart, and 32 of them married cousins, from first cousins to fifth cousins.

There was no prohibition against cousin marriages, either within the Jewish religion or

most European countries. You may have heard about recent research that says that children of non-related couples have a 2-3% risk of birth defects, as opposed to first cousins having a 4—6% risk. And, second cousins have little, if any, increased chance of having children with birth defects. Granted the first-cousin risk is twice as high as for non-related couples, that still is a small percentage of children. And there is the chance that the good genes from both parents can be inherited.

For more names and dates in my genealogy database, I've also used the St. Thomas Synagogue birth, marriage and death records; the Piza family tree and history by Vida Lindo Guiterman; the family trees of American Jewish families collected by Rabbi Malcolm Stern; the various family trees developed by Uncle Ralph Lindo; the histories of the Fidanque family written by Uncle Bill Fidanque, and the explanations of who is related to whom from my mother, Emita Fidanque Levy and my grandmother Inez Brandon Fidanque. There are also the wonderful family trees provided by many of you and other Maduro's and Delvalle's. I grew up with the Fidanque family tree over my head, in my parents' and grandparents' homes, so I thought that the Fidanque tree was "finished." All I was interested in was that my name was at the very top, as our direct line was the trunk, and the tree stopped with my generation as the top branches. It was only when I started doing genealogy that I discovered that some branches off to the side were not complete.

I also have to make special mention of the person who involved me with all of you, Morris Maduro, who brought me into the Maduro Net as "official genealogist" five years ago. And also Pat and Denys Gribbin of London who I work with daily by email on the De Leon, Toledano, and Maduro trees; Anita Henriquez who is an encyclopedia of family history; Sandy de Marchena whose Curacao family tree is invaluable, and Cheryl Pinto in Colon, Panama who keeps track of the Sasso family. And of course Rene, who has given me hundreds of new Delvalle cousins and whose Internet postings and website keep bringing in more descendants of all the families. The most surprising and satisfying of these was an email from a woman who recognized the Delvalle name in one of Rene's Internet messages and wrote him about other names in her husband's

family such as Brandon and Piza. It turns out her husband is a descendant of Anita Brandon Piza, the sister of my great-grandfather David Henry Brandon. The result of our correspondence was a tree of 80 new family members, including one cousin who lives near us in San Francisco who took Bob and me sailing on San Francisco Bay, and others who are in the New York area that my mother and I met. Coincidentally, right after that I was browsing the used bookstores on the Internet and put in the name Piza just for fun. The Piza Book by Vida Guiterman came up, and it was the original edition available from a bookstore in Wisconsin. I called the store to order and explained that I was a relative of the Piza's. The owner said I might find the family tree useful, and I answered that I knew there were lots of trees in it. "No," she said, "there is a family tree on a separate piece of paper." It turned out that this was a piece of paper with the very same family tree that showed the descendants of Anita Brandon Piza, so I had now discovered this family twice!

Although that Piza/Brandon family doesn't yet have a Maduro connection, I may find one eventually. Then they can be added to the other 3000 known descendants from the first Maduro couple. So keep those family trees coming!